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HOW TO GROW

Cultivated Blueberries

BRINTON FRUIT FARM

HANOVER, R. D. 3, PENNSYLVANIA

ABOUT OUR BLUEBERRIES

SUPERSIZE CULTIVATED BLUEBERRIES are delicious. Practically seedless, the fruit is firm, meaty, and not perishable. By far the most profitable of bush fruits, blueberries range in price from 40 cents to 70 cents a quart. There is a strong demand for Cultivated Blueberries that present production cannot satisfy.

Not only is the fruit of the Cultivated Blueberry magnificent but the bushes themselves, entirely without thorns, are of great beauty the year around. As shrub or hedge plants, they rival all others. In spring when the pink buds open into waxy white flower bells, the leaves are light bronze green. Later against the rich green of the summer foliage, great clusters of frosty blueberries, the size of grapes, hang majestically. In autumn, the leaves are a gorgeous crimson and through the winter the twigs and branches show a brilliant red.

Cultivated Blueberries are unusual in their dependability, permanence and abundant production. They are delicious as a fresh fruit eaten with sugar and cream, and when baked in muffins and pies. The flavor is similar to the wild huckleberry. Blueberries keep for weeks after being picked and are excellent for commercial shipping. They may be preserved commercially and for home use by canning or by quick-freezing. Frozen blueberries maintain the shape, color and flavor of the fresh fruit.

VARIETIES

Blueberry plants vary in size and shape of bush, color of berry, and time of ripening. Our blueberry classification chart lists the varieties according to certain characteristics of ripening, size of berry, and dessert quality. Two varieties are needed to insure cross pollination. The varieties ripen in succession, providing a picking season of 7 weeks. Select plants listed as early, midseason, and late to extend the blueberry season. The following hybrid varieties are the best developed by the government from the wild high bush blueberries found from Maine to North Carolina:

EARLY SEASON: Ripen about June 20

WEYMOUTH, JUNE, CABOT

MIDSEASON: Ripen about July 1

RANCOCAS, CONCORD, STANLEY, PIONEER, SCAMMELL

LATE SEASON: Ripen about July 7

ATLANTIC, DIXI, PEMBERTON, RUBEL, JERSEY, BURLINGTON

PLANTING

Cultivated Blueberries first appeared on the market in 1917. They are now grown commercially in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, Minnesota, Michigan, and Massachusetts. The plants are hardy to winters in these areas. To grow blueberries successfully, acid soil is absolutely essential (4.5 to 5.5 PH). If the soil is not acid, it can be made suitable by mulching with sawdust, peat moss, etc. Small amounts of finely ground sulphur (1 to 2 lbs. per 100 sq. ft)

or ammonium sulphate, ($\frac{1}{4}$ lb. per bush) will also increase the acidity. Good drainage is also necessary. Blueberries prefer water UNDER THEIR FEET, 14 to 18 inches below the soil surface, NOT AROUND THEIR TOES. They thrive best in sunny locations but will also grow in partially shaded places.

Plants are set out in early April (or after October 15), 4 ft. apart with 8 or 10 ft. between the rows. For tractor cultivation be sure to allow 10 feet or more between rows. They should be put in the ground a little deeper than they were in the nursery. Peat moss may be worked in around the roots to increase the humus of the soil but DO NOT PUT FERTILIZER OR MANURE IN THE HOLE.

When the plants arrive, soak the roots in water and then set out as soon as possible. If planting must be delayed, cover the roots with wet bags or peat moss, or place the plants in a shallow trench covering the roots with soil.

CULTIVATION

For blueberry plantings in Pennsylvania, we have found a MULCH ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL to increase soil acidity and conserve the moisture which keeps the fine shallow roots from drying out. *Sawdust* is a very satisfactory mulch. Leaves, straw, pine needles, and peat moss are also good. Spread the mulch 4 inches thick on top of the ground and in a radius of a foot or more around each plant. In commercial planting, it is advisable to mulch the entire blueberry row and cultivate between rows. THE MULCHING MATERIAL MUST BE RENEWED EACH YEAR.

Although the mulch helps to keep weeds down around the plants, some hoeing is required. All cultivation around the plants must be shallow to protect the roots which lie close to the surface of the ground. Clean cultivation is the usual practice between the rows until harvest when a cover crop may be sown or weeds allowed to grow to increase organic matter in the soil.

No fertilizer is applied the year plants are transplanted. The second year 2 oz. of a complete fertilizer such as 5-10-5 is applied. The amount is increased one ounce each Spring until a total of 7 oz. is being used per plant. Fertilizer is broadcast in a circle around the plant on top of the ground, taking care that no fertilizer touches the plant. Manure should not be used and NEVER USE LIME near blueberries; it is poison to these acid loving plants.

In small plantings insects and diseases are not sufficiently serious to require spraying.

For more complete information on Blueberry Culture write to the U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C. for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1951. "Blueberry Growing."

PRUNING

Most Cultivated Blueberry plants overproduce and must be pruned. To secure large berries on vigorous new wood, the extra fruit buds and weak stems must be pruned off. Little or no pruning, however, is needed on plants younger than 4 years old. Pruning each year is done in the spring while the buds are dormant. Instructions are as follows:

1. Cut off low spreading branches next to the ground, leaving only the erect branches and shoots.
2. If center of plant is bushy, cut out the weak and old branches to make room for new growth. Occasionally if plants are not vigorous, some of the old main shoots are pruned at the ground to produce new vigorous growth.

3. Remove many of the slender small branches which have few of the larger fruit buds.
4. Cut back fruit buds leaving about 4 large buds per branch. (Some varieties which do not have more than 4 or 5 fruit buds per branch do not require bud pruning.)

YIELDS

In southern Pennsylvania berries ripen the end of June and picking continues through July. Berries are picked at 5 to 7 day intervals. Each bush has 3 to 6 pickings depending upon the variety. When fully ripe and ready to pick, the berries should be completely blue at the stem end and not showing a reddish color. Immature berries do not have the sweet blueberry flavor.

Although only two plants of different varieties are needed to insure cross pollination, 12 plants in the family garden will supply an abundance of berries throughout the blueberry season. The first year after transplanting, a bush will produce a few berries. Commercial production starts about the third year after planting, with six year old plants yielding up to 3000 quarts per acre. Full bearing age is reached in 8 or 10 years. The life of a blueberry plant is from 50 to 75 years.

Cultivated Blueberries are the size of grapes, measuring from $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. They may easily be distinguished from huckleberries by their frosty blue color and their very few fine soft seeds—huckleberries are a blue-black and have large hard seeds. With prices ranging from 40 cents to 70 cents a quart, blueberries are by far the most profitable of bush fruits. There is a strong demand for these plump, delicious, supersize berries that present production cannot satisfy.

ASK FOR CURRENT PRICE LIST

BRINTON FRUIT FARM

James H. Brinton

Grower

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